

What is claimed is:

1. A videophone terminal for communicating with other terminals over a network by using speech and pictures including a virtual character generated based on the face of a person, said video phone terminal comprising:

5 a video processor for analyzing a picture obtained by a camera, identifying a location of a face in the picture, and extracting feature points of the face;

 an audio processor for analyzing audio obtained from a microphone, and processing the audio; and

10 a virtual character generator for generating a virtual character based on the extracted feature points,

 wherein, when a predetermined operation is performed using a keyboard or when said audio processor identifies a predetermined keyword in the speech of a user,

15 1) said virtual character generator generates a modified picture of the virtual character or generates a predetermined picture, and then,

 2) the generated picture is transmitted to the other terminal.

2. The videophone terminal according to Claim 1,
 wherein said modified picture of the virtual character is generated by:

5 changing a size of the whole face of the virtual character or each part of the face of the virtual

character, or

drawing a predetermined pattern on the virtual character.

3. The videophone terminal according to Claim 1,
wherein, when a predetermined operation is performed by using the keyboard,

5 said audio processor generates audio data by replacing the speech of the user by a predetermined sound effect, or superimposing the predetermined sound effect on the speech of the user, and then

said generated audio data is transmitted to the other terminal.

4. The videophone terminal according to Claim 2,
wherein, when a predetermined operation is performed by using the keyboard,

5 said audio processor generates audio data by replacing the speech of the user by a predetermined sound effect, or superimposing the predetermined sound effect on the speech of the user, and then

said generated audio data is transmitted to the other terminal.

5. A videophone terminal for communicating with other terminals over a network by using speech and pictures

including a virtual character generated based on the face of a person, said videophone terminal comprising:

5 a video processor for analyzing a picture obtained by a camera, identifying a location of a face in the picture, and extracting feature points of the face;

 an audio processor for analyzing audio obtained from a microphone and processing the audio; and

10 a virtual character generator for generating a virtual character based on the extracted feature pointes,

 wherein, when a predetermined operation is performed for releasing a pending state by using a keyboard or when a face of an user operating the videophone before 15 the pending state is recognized from a face obtained during the pending state by matching the feature points of both faces,

1) said virtual character generator generates a picture indicating that said virtual character comes back 20 on a screen and said audio processor generates a predetermined sound,

2) the generated picture and the predetermined sound are transmitted to the other terminal, and then,

3) the pending state is released.

6. A videophone terminal for communicating with other terminals over a network by using speech and pictures including a virtual character generated based on the face

of a person, said videophone terminal comprising:

5 a video processor for analyzing a picture obtained by a camera, identifying a location of a face in the picture, and extracting feature points of the face;

an audio processor for analyzing audio obtained from a microphone and processing the audio; and

10 a virtual character generator for generating a virtual character based on the extracted feature points,

wherein, when a predetermined operation is performed at the end of communication with the other terminal, said virtual character generator generates a 15 picture indicating that the virtual character is disappearing from a screen and the generated picture is transmitted to the other terminal before a line is disconnected, and

wherein plural types of the picture indicating that 20 the virtual character is disappearing from a screen are capable of being generated in accordance with the predetermined operation selected by the user.